

PRESS RELEASE

21 South Fruit St, Suite 14, Concord, NH 03301 – 603-271-2261 – www.nh.gov/insurance

For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Catherine Tucker
Catherine.Tucker@doj.nh.gov
603-271-7987
603-271-1406 - FAX

COUNTERFEIT SWEEPSTAKES CHECKS

Concord, New Hampshire – June 18, 2007 - Insurance Commissioner Roger Sevigny and Attorney General Kelly Ayotte today urged New Hampshire consumers not to cash any sweepstakes checks purporting to be from MMG Insurance Company.

Consumers across the country have reported receiving such checks through the mail. These checks are accompanied by a letter that makes unauthorized use of MMG's name and logo. The letter falsely advises that the recipient is the winner of a sweepstakes and encloses a check that appears legitimate. The checks are in fact counterfeit and the use of MMG's name and logo is unauthorized.

"New Hampshire residents should be suspicious of any unsolicited sweepstakes checks received in the mail. With today's technology, it is not difficult for a scammer to create documents that appear real. Many people across the country are getting these false checks. We want folks in New Hampshire to be on guard as well," urged Attorney General Ayotte.

"These types of scams are common," explained Attorney General Ayotte. Attorney General Ayotte reminds consumers that "You cannot rely on the fact that your bank cashes the check."

Consumers are often fooled by such checks because their bank will initially cash the check and permit the consumer to withdraw the funds. Often, the consumer is asked to pay a "processing fee" to the scammer before the remainder of the purported funds can be released. Since the consumer is able to cash the realistic-looking check, the consumer feels that the offer is legitimate and sends the processing fee. Later, when the check does not clear, the bank will demand that the funds be repaid along with any fees associated with the returned check, and the consumer is also unable to recover the false processing fee.

Commissioner Sevigny wants consumers to know that the New Hampshire Insurance Department stands ready to assist with questions or concerns related to any solicitation consumers receive purporting to be from an insurance company. Sevigny said “I urge New Hampshire citizens to contact my office about any insurance offer that seems suspicious or too good to be true, to confirm that the offer is legitimate and from a licensed insurance company. Help us fight fake insurance and other scams by becoming an informed consumer.”

Consumers who receive these letters are encouraged to contact the United States Secret Service at: U.S. Secret Service, 197 Loudon Rd., Suite 250, Concord, NH 03301, 603-228-3428.

The Consumer Protection and Antitrust Bureau of New Hampshire maintains a toll free consumer hotline at 1-888-468-4454. It is staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm to assist consumers with questions related to counterfeit checks and other consumer related issues.

The New Hampshire Insurance Department maintains a toll free Consumer Hotline at 1-800-852-3416. It is staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm to assist consumers with questions related to insurance products, department licensees and other insurance issues.

###

ABOUT THE NH INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

The first insurance regulator in the US, the NH Insurance Department was created in 1851 and charged with enforcing and administering New Hampshire’s insurance laws. The department, an agency of the executive branch of New Hampshire state government, conducts safety and soundness and market conduct examinations of licensees, licenses insurance companies and insurance producers, reviews premium rates and policy forms, provides assistance, information and referral services to New Hampshire insurance consumers, and administers the filing and collection of New Hampshire’s insurance premium tax. For more information, visit the Insurance Department’s web site at: www.nh.gov/insurance.